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LITERARY CORRESPONDENCE.

FRANCE.

EVEN a partial analysis of the erudite and beautiful work of M. AD. COSTE, *L'expérience des peuples et les prévisions qu'elle autorise*, would make too great demands upon the space at our disposal. This new volume is the sequel to the *Principes d'une sociologie objective*, of which I have already spoken at some length. M. Coste studies here the evolution of all the social phenomena that constitute in his view the material of sociology, as *government, production, beliefs, and solidarity*. He exhibits the concordance of these four great "functions,"—a concordance or correlation which, as is well known, he conceives to be subject to the influence of a single initial and propulsive fact,—viz., *population*.

From this last point of view, supposing men to have emerged from the state of savagery, the stages of social progress are marked by the following creations: (1) Castles and villages; (2) Towns placed over villages; (3) Provincial capitals placed over towns and villages; (4) State capitals placed over large cities, towns, and villages; (5) Federal capitals placed over state capitals; etc., etc.

The series of sociological laws which it seems to him possible to formulate has the following form :

1. The law of assimilation, conformably to which the human species tends to unification.
2. The law of correlation between the social state and the population.

These are the two primary laws which determine the evolu-

tion, which is then subject to the following four secondary laws, severally governing the social functions :

3. The law of the segregation of power.
4. The law of the division and organisation of labor.
5. The law of the progression of knowledge (Comte).
6. The law of the equalisation of social conditions.

7. A law which regulates the concordance of these four individual evolutions, without which one should not be justified in speaking at all of "sociological laws," or "necessary relations having their origin in the nature of things," as the phrase of Montesquieu goes.

8. A law which regulates the persistence or survival of modifications of formal functions.

M. Coste predicts the installation of a social *régime* which shall exhibit a more compact solidarity and shall be the product of a species of federation, not geographic but organic, and composed of corporations and syndicates, all of which are interested in maintaining the independence of a higher tribunal which shall assure them their liberties and their rights.

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Less finished and less strongly imbued with the genuine signification of sociology is the work of M. A. BRASSEUR, *La question sociale, études sur les bases du collectivisme*. According to M. Brasseur, the upward march of individualism is a concomitant of all real social progress. Man is led by his own interests to bring his subjective or personal aims into conformity with the objective or general aims. Altruism, in which the socialists find a new spring of action, is but a metaphysical idol. Altruism tends to destroy the originality of the human molecule, whilst individualism is part and parcel of the principle of life itself and the incarnation of natural law. The ideal of mankind should be the exaltation of the ego by elevation, not by elimination.

After this, it seems contradictory for the author to relegate economic factors to a second place in order to give the first place to the psychological elements, as also for him to present the social question as a moral question. He has committed the fault of not

distinguishing between a chimerical conception of altruism and the principle of human sympathy, which is no less eternal and efficacious in its workings than the principle of *primum sibi*. The insufficiency of his psychology annuls his conclusions and affects the value of his criticisms. His analyses are inadequate, and his doctrine is not capable of precise limitation.

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The essay of M. G. DUMAS, on joy and sorrow (*La tristesse et la joie*) is the most important study of an affective state that has yet been made. M. Dumas does not proceed by the customary way, which is to search for cases in point, to formulate their conditions, and thereupon to proceed immediately to generalisations. Instead of studying the same affective state in many different individuals, he has been led by preference to consider many different affective states and emotional variations in the same individual, and it will not be denied that he has been perfectly justified in proceeding in this manner.

I cannot take up in detail the numerous analyses and observations contained in this work. I shall simply note that M. Dumas, who is at variance here with M. Ribot, does not conceive joy and sorrow to be "general emotions," having no definite sphere of their own and diffusing themselves throughout all the manifestations of the affective life, but on the contrary as "special and particular emotions," having their special reactions.

As to the nature of these affective states, the question which here arises is the same as that raised by the much-debated theses of Lange and William James. M. Dumas discusses these theses more profoundly than has been done before; showing what they have in common and what they have individually. For William James, emotion is not only physiological in character, that is to say, dependent upon the condition of the organism of which it is the conscious expression, but it is also of peripheral origin. In other words, emotion is not a psychical phenomenon having a distinct seat in the brain, but a genuine phenomenon of sensibility having its source, like all sensations, in the periphery of the body

and perceived in the cortical centers like all other sensible excitations.

M. Dumas admits that sentiment is physiological in character, but without failing to recognise that it is difficult to explain why this or that vaso-motor condition is associated with this or that idea or perception. But he withholds his assent to the doctrine of peripheral origin. If that origin is in no wise subject to doubt for states of passive sorrow and serene joy (for which the clinical proofs abound in his work), the thesis does not possess the same likelihood in cases of agreeable or painful *excitation*. It appears, on the contrary, that "pleasure and pain in their acute form are not the effect but the cause of the majority of peripheral reactions that characterise suffering and exuberant joy." But it is possible, he remarks, that the excitation may provoke two species of reactions: the first being primitive and reflex, as well as the determining cause of pleasure and pain; the other being automatic and secondary and therefore the consequence of pleasure and pain. On this hypothesis, James would be right, throughout. Properly speaking, sensibility would never exist in the nervous centers. But this new hypothesis, which would have the advantage of bringing unity into the theory of emotion, is at direct variance with facts of considerable significance, and would seem sometimes to be contradicted even by common observation.

I must cease here with my rapid *résumé* of this work. What I have said will, I hope, be sufficient to show the importance and the interest of the work of M. Dumas.

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M. HENRI BERGSON gives us in his *Le rire, essai sur la signification du comique*, an excellent and attractive work, in which he essays to group about a single general point of view the various theories which have hitherto been propounded in explanation of humor. Humor is born, according to him, whenever we discover in a man an "articulate Jack-in-the-box"; wherever we find automatism and rigidity where there ought to be flexibility,—wherever mechanism has supplanted life. To this principle he refers all the various species of humor; he points out the application of

this principle in the humor of forms and of movements, then in the humor of situations and of words, and finally in the humor of character. He has performed his task with moderation and acumen, employing a great wealth of illustrations and closely studying the different processes by which wags and buffoons, punsters and wits, novelists and playwrights, have in all ages produced humor and provoked laughter. His study is certainly the most comprehensive that I know of, and M. Bergson has succeeded in explaining by his principle a greater number of cases than any other author. But, if I am not mistaken, there is always room for the generally accepted theory which connects laughter with the non-conformity or incongruence of two ideas, with this difference, that the nature of this incongruence is here always specified, and that the same general type of nonconformity is found in all possible situations.

M. Bergson has also sought to determine the "social value" of laughter. Laughter, which is the enemy of all rigidity and of all automatism, whether of mind or body, constitutes in his eyes a punishment for the existence of these deficiencies, which actually diminish in some measure the social value of a man. Comedy would thus occupy a position between social life and art; it would be artistic in one phase and moral in the other. But this is a consideration the development of which I should prefer the reader to follow in the book itself. Many novel and curious remarks will also interest him there, remarks upon the distinction between tragedy and comedy, upon the characteristics of classical comedy, upon the analogy of the absurdity of the comical personage with the absurdity of dreams.

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M. LOUIS PROAL has written an admirable book in his *Le crime et le suicide passionnels*, a work based on the solid experience of a civil magistrate. It is of high interest to psychology for the analyses which it contains, and to literary criticism for the comparison which it makes of the heroes of the theater and the novel with the observations of the judiciary. I have no criticisms to prefer save with respect to points of pure doctrine, and accept without reserve

the general conclusions of M. Proal, either when he is condemning love outside the pale of marriage and is portraying the dangers of "sensual" love, or when he is castigating the crime of seduction in all its forms and is pleading for conjugal fidelity; when he denounces the evils which result from our literature, when he takes to task the increasing laxity of moral instruction in families, or when he emphasises the favorable influence which religious ideas exercise upon the moral life of woman, in particular; and finally when he appeals to the laws, which may be said to contribute greatly to the formation of habits and to prepare the way for good morals in a wisely regulated state.

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M. L. BRUNSWICG publishes an *Introduction à la vie de l'esprit*, a work of high character, divided into five chapters which treat of conscious life, scientific life, esthetic life, moral life, and religious life.

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M. G. BONET-MAURY gives us a *Histoire de la liberté de conscience en France depuis l'édit de Nantes jusqu'à juillet 1870*. This is a thoroughly meritorious and trustworthy work of history, written in a generous spirit and interesting to read. The author is of opinion that "there has always been in every epoch of the world's development a rigid correlation between political liberty and philosophical or religious liberty, so that one may lay it down as a principle that liberty of conscience has no worse enemy than political despotism, nor a better support than freedom of speech and of the press." This is doubtless true, yet it is incumbent upon us to assign to these words, "despotism," "liberty," etc., their just valuation at each moment of history, and to take into account the necessities of contemporaneous politics. Other writers might explain very simply and even very brutally why France has not become Protestant and why liberty of conscience has always been difficult to gain; one has even reasons for thinking that this conquest has not been easier since the triumph of Protestantism. From the point of view of sociology the question perhaps does not present itself in the terms in which M. Bonet-Maury has presented it to us; the

psychological error and the theological error to which he attributes religious intolerance as to its two principal causes, appear to me to be at most labels beneath which are hidden more positive and precise reasons. But these reservations which I merely indicate here, without developing them, detract nothing from the real historical interest of this excellent work.

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With M. L'ABBÉ CLODIUS PIAT and his book on *Socrates*, with M. THÉODORE RUYSSSEN and his book on *Kant*, with M. LE BARON CARRA DE VAUX and his book on *Avicenna*, is inaugurated a new collection of works treating of the great metaphysical thinkers of humanity and bearing the title *Les grands philosophes*,—a collection which will be issued under the editorship of M. Piat, and of which the express purpose is to determine the contributions made to human knowledge by the different great masters of philosophy. The three volumes which are offered us to-day merit equal attention, but the novelty of the subject will doubtless lend greatest interest to the work on *Avicenna*. This book has been written with impartiality, and is replete with material. For my part, I always welcome books devoted to the brilliant civilisation of the Arabs, which Littré has called the “Lesser Renaissance,” and without which a connecting link in the history of civilisation would be missing. M. de Vaux gives us useful information concerning the origins of this civilisation, or concerning the ante-Islamic period; and the attractiveness of these historical pages is not diminished by the analysis which the author gives of the doctrines professed by the Islamic philosophers. In this analysis of doctrines there are traces of concern apparent to restore Scholasticism to a place of honor; and in fact the new collection is self-confessedly a contribution to the Neo-Thomistic movement. Yet this new endeavor on the part of French Catholicism is not for us to decry, for we are of those who attach a high importance to the discussion of philosophic questions, when nobly and learnedly conducted.

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Two important works in the history of literature deserve to be noticed. The first is by M. H. OUVRÉ, *Les formes littéraires de la*

pensée grecque, a work exhibiting great learning and attractiveness, though sometimes subtle and slightly obscure, in which the author has attempted to discover and to interpret the concatenation of forms in which the literary thought of the Greeks has expressed itself. The second is by M. G. RENARD and entitled *La méthode scientifique de l'histoire littéraire*, a meritorious production in which M. Renard expounds the principles which to his mind should direct historians of literature, and applies these principles to the history of French literature as a totality. M. Renard is distinctly opposed to the employment of the deductive method which was so much used by Taine and which is equivalent, as I have often remarked, to the assumption of some single arbitrary fact of which all others vary as a function and which is therefore considered as the sole determining cause of all the phenomena involved. To proceed inductively, that is to say, in the present case, to establish natural groups in the development of literary life, to assign the formulæ for these groups, to show their points of connexion with surrounding conditions, and to determine if possible the laws of the transition of one form into another: such is the general plan of the work. I restrict myself to the foregoing indication only of the contents of this work, and seize the present opportunity of recommending to my readers, and perhaps it might be well also to do the same for M. Renard, the broad plan of study which has been drawn up in the *Compendium* recently published by Gayley and Scott and issued by Ginn & Co., of Boston.

Finally, I may simply mention in this connexion the work of M. OSSIF-LOURIÉ, entitled *La philosophie sociale dans le théâtre d'Ibsen*.

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The third volume of the *Année sociologique* (the volume for 1898-1899) is of no less interest than its predecessors. It contains three original memoirs (I forego the mention of the notices and reviews of books). The memoir of M. F. RATZEL, *Le sol, la société et l'état* gives us a valuable *résumé* of the socio-geographical theory of which M. Ratzel is the most accredited representative. The memoir of M. G. RICHARD, which bears the title *Les crises sociales et*

les conditions de la criminalité, gives a good criticism of two antagonistic theories, one of which attributes crime to the pathological condition of the individual and the other to the condition of society. According to M. Richard, criminality is probably the consequence of a moral retrogression which makes parasites of certain individuals; but the cause of this retrogression should not be sought outside of the social *milieu*. It not being permissible to consider criminality as the survival of a prior atavistic morality, it is necessary to attribute it to some crisis of society,—which always intervenes whenever the social discipline is forced to undergo a transformation.

M. STEINMETZ is the author of an attempt entitled *Classification des types sociaux et catalogue de peuples*, a preparatory work which he correctly believes to be indispensable to the fruitful prosecution of sociological research. He criticises the classifications which have hitherto been propounded and proposes a new one of his own, in which there are *four branches* springing from the progressive character of the intellectual life, and *ten classes* based upon the general character of economic life. The catalogue of peoples, such as he conceives it, would be drawn up in terms of a special notation.

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The *Année philosophique* for 1899 shows a new name on its title-page, that of M. HAMELIN, who makes his *début* in this number with an essay on *Induction*; M. RENOUVIER treats of *Personality*; M. DAURIAC treats of the *Method and Philosophy of Shadworth Hodgson*; while M. PILLON furnishes a study of the evolution of idealism in the eighteenth century.

M. DESPAUX in his *Genèse de la matière et de l'énergie* attacks the problem of the origin and destiny of worlds. Matter alone, in a state of extreme diffusion, or rather the impenetrable ether, is, according to M. Despaux, sufficient to explain both matter commonly so called (that is, matter endowed with weight) and energy in all its forms. This view does not differ greatly, at least as to its primary and most general datum, from the doctrine of Mme. Clémence Royer, of which we spoke in the last *Monist*.

A word in conclusion upon a little essay by M. L. FAVRE, *La*

Musique des couleurs,¹ the first volume of a series bearing the title *Bibliothèque des méthodes dans les beaux-arts*. Basing his opinion upon the analogy of sounds and colors, M. Favre affirms the possibility of a species of painting which should resemble music. Painting, which is an immobile art is, according to him, susceptible of being made a mobile art. This extension of its domain would require first the establishment of a gamut of colors founded upon principles corresponding to those of the gamut of sounds. It would then require the invention of certain ingenious schemes of disposing these graduated colors so as to realise the new ideal. It may be objected that the analogy between the scale of colors and that of sounds is far from being perfect, and certain consequences which I have not the time to point out here follow from the very fact that two principles, which might be termed *lighting* and *coloring*, intervene in the establishment of gamuts and series of gamuts. On the other hand, it is not easily seen how the rational employment of a notation of colors could ever give anything else than a simple "play of colors," and how one could pass from the play of illuminated fountains for example to a production of genuine art. In fine, I have my doubts relative to the advantages of any collaboration or synthesis of the arts having in view the increase of their powers of expression. But these criticisms, which I have set forth at greater length in the *Revue philosophique*, do not prevent me from appreciating the merits of the work of M. Favre, who is a talented as well as an ingenious writer.

LUCIEN ARRÉAT.

PARIS.

¹ Paris, Schleicher, publisher. All the other works mentioned are published by F. Alcan.